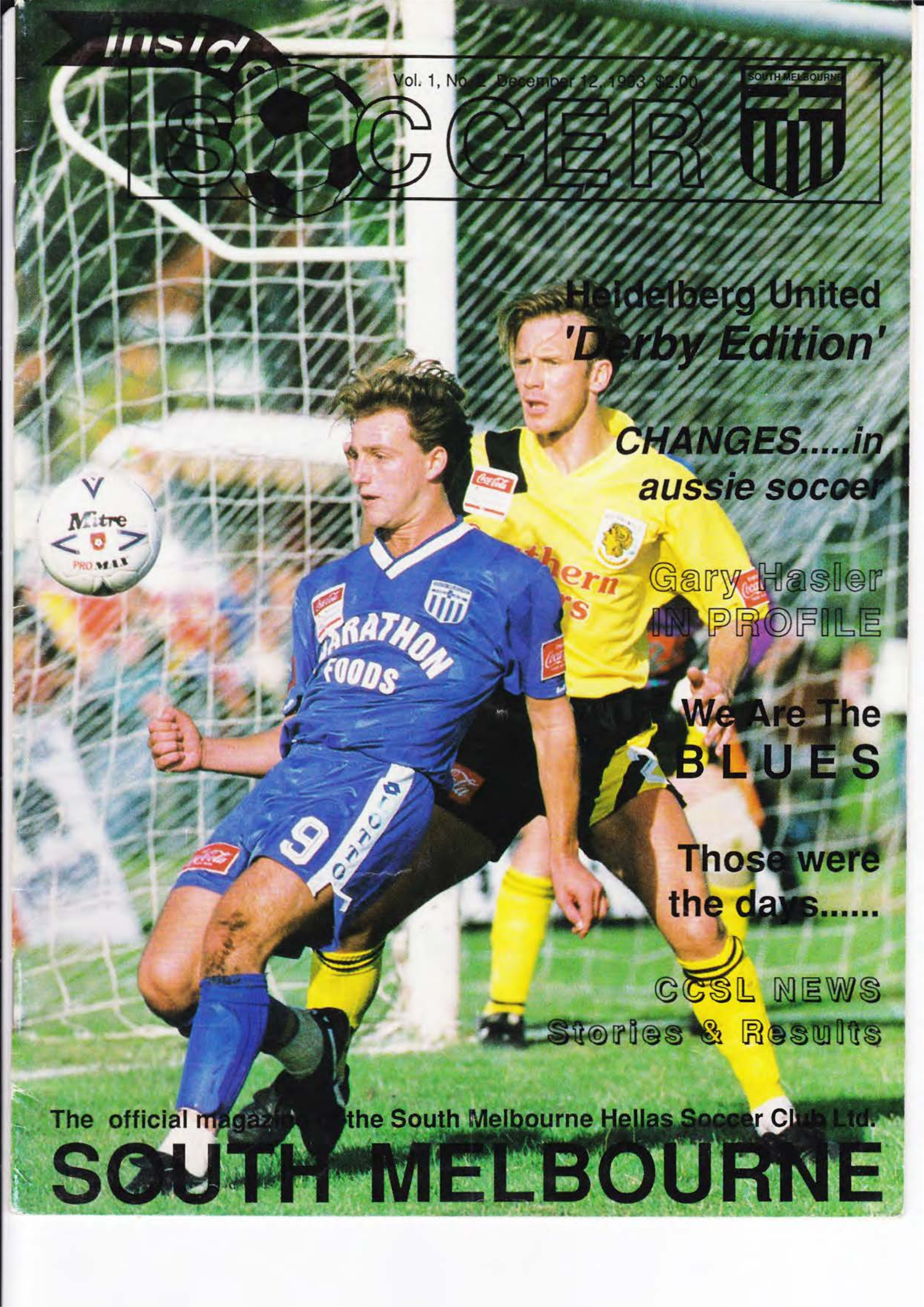
inside
SOCCER
Vol. 1, No. 2 December 12, 1993 $2.00
SOUTH MELBOURNE
Heidelberg United
'Derby Edition'
CHANGES.....in
aussie soccer
Gary Hasler
IN PROFILE
We Are The
BLUES
Those were
the days.....
CCSL NEWS
Stories & Results
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CONTENTS

Page 4 ..... All Change for Aussie Soccer
Page 6 ..... Boot Room Gossip
Page 6 ..... Know The Players – Gary Hasler
Pages 12/13 ..... We Are The Blues
Pages 15 ..... Club & PLayer Stats
Pages 18 ..... Heidelberg United
Page 20 ..... From The Press Box
Page 21/27 ..... CCSL News
Page 28/29 ..... Those Were The Days
Page 30 ..... Baby Blues In Focus

INSIDE SOCCER is the official magazine of the South Melbourne Soccer Club

Editor: Bruce Campbell
PO Box 869
Queanbeyan NSW 2620
Tel: (06) 299 6083

Layout: Susan Houghton

South Melbourne Hellas Soccer Club
Editorial Committee
Peter Filopoulos Jim Karakoussis Peter Abraam
Emmanuel Kortis, Peter Cartsidimes, John Dimitropoulos

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES
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What a start to the season – AGAIN

It almost seemed as if the season was starting for us all over again with that brilliant win against West Adelaide and then the even more impressive drubbing of Adelaide City.

And in a way it was because of the gap in games due to the involvement by four of our players with the national team. While it was great to have Mehmet Durakovic, Paul Wade, Jason Polak and Kevin Muscat involved with the *Coca-Cola* Socceroos it was good to get back to CCSL proceedings.

It wasn't just the points but the style that we showed in our victories that signalled the re-start of the season for the 'blues'. But we shouldn't make any mistake about just how hard this season is going to be. Already Melbourne Knights, Sydney United, Newcastle, Sydney Olympic and Marconi are showing their worth at the top of the table.

If we are going to overtake them then it will only be as a result of a superhuman effort by the coaching staff and players. No-one in Australian soccer should underestimate the enormity of the task involved in playing five mid-week catch-up games. South Melbourne is paying the price of having so many fine players at Middle Park that they form the backbone of the national team. It is a big price and one that the ASF would do well to foresee in the future.

Already there is talk of compensation to the club and at least this is a step in the right direction.

In the future we hope to have just as many players involved with the four national teams but we cannot afford to jeopardise our club at the same time. It is unjust to place such a burden on a club simply because it is so successful.

I am sure that those involved with the planning of the competition and our national team commitments at Rockdale will be 'battle-hardened' by this experience and that in future any disruptions to the domestic league programme will be kept to a minimum.

Bruce Campbell

COVER PHOTO

Action in colour from last year's clash with Heidelberg. Paul Trimboli with his shadow, Gary Bratten.

PHOTO COURTESY SOCCER AUSTRALIA

All change for Aussie soccer

ASF
Australian Soccer Federation

by
Bruce Campbell

the CCSL is set for its biggest shake-up in years with the possibility of up to five clubs being relegated this season

The Australian Soccer Federation is set to institute changes to the structure of the game which, if successful, could well see soccer emerge as a serious contender for the throne of number one Australia-wide football code.

When the National Soccer League, with the financial backing of the Philips multi-national group of companies, was launched in 1977 it was the first truly national competition of any sport in this country.

Prodded along by the success of their round ball cousins the two other main football codes have fought back.

Australian rules has changed from its home-state only look of the VFL to a more representative Australian Football League and embraced NSW, South Australia and Western Australia.

Rugby League has responded also by extending outwards from the parochial Sydney competition to include Canberra, Brisbane, the Gold Coast and is now set to embrace North Queensland, Perth and New Zealand also.

But while it looked as if the soccer moguls of Rockdale were content to be continually upstaged they have now shown us otherwise, with the announcement of a campaign which is full of aggression and determination.

John Constantine: set to lead the CCSL on its most progressive move ever

Top of the calendar is the re-establishment of the CCSL as a major competition with the plans as outlined in the last issue of *Inside Soccer*.

But the ASF look set to take the CCSL one stage further with the inclusion of a team from Perth, so long ignored as the outcast of Aussie soccer.

As well as bringing in a team from the Golden West there is a plan afoot at ASF HQ to reduce the competition to ten teams.

The first step in that plan will see a proposed amendment to the League's constitution which at present states that there must be a minimum of 14 clubs in the league.

Once that clause is removed, and it could happen as early as next February's AGM, then the ASF will move quickly to reinforce the criterion required for CCSL membership.

In the past the league has often turned a blind eye to the shortcomings of some CCSL clubs. Now it looks almost certain that the clubs which cannot fulfil most, if not all, of the requirements will be shown the door.

Insiders at Rockdale tip that that means two clubs from each of Sydney and Melbourne being relegated – maybe at the end of this coming season.

Already the bottom placed regional club is set for the drop and they will be replaced by Perth which is also set to field a team in the new Singapore Super League in January.

The format of any new league set up is still being kept secret but it is unlikely that clubs will be asked to play each other four times. Instead a normal home and away programme is likely to remain with the top-up of a national cup competition with up to 64 clubs, and overseas club competitions.

Already there has been criticism from coaches and officials of other clubs over the possible move.

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One coach has condemned any such talk as "disastrous" and said that relegation could mean a loss of up to one million dollars for his club.

On the other hand media commentators such as SBS's Johnny Warren and Les Murray are strong advocates of a reduction in the number of clubs in the top flight.

WARREN: change is vital

"We just don't have enough players coming through to supply the overseas market and our own clubs," Warren told me recently.

"At the same time, we must have teams from both Perth and Canberra in the CCSL.

"If we are to get back to the stage we were at when we started the league in 1977 then these steps are absolutely vital."

And, it seems that the national team is not being forgotten either with a planned international tournament to take place in May with Scotland and England already head of the invitation list.

ASF Chairman John Constantine says that reactions from the two countries which invented the game are favourable.

If that is the case then Australian soccer fans can prepare to witness all the intense rivalry of a Scotland-England clash - the oldest international in history and one which has been banned in Britain for the last few years because of the intense emotions that it prompts.

There are obviously concerns about how such an ambitious programme of events will be funded but the good news is that the sponsorship of the Coca-Cola System is unlikely to drop off - despite almost constant editorials to the contrary in the daily press over the last few years.

"There isn't much chance that Coca-Cola won't come back as major sponsors of the CCSL," said Cec Bucello, the ASF's dynamic marketing manager.

"The only question still to be answered is the exact monetary amount of that sponsorship.

"Obviously the ASF would like the amount to be an increase on the previous deal, but whatever I am absolutely confident that Coca-Cola will remain as our major sponsor."

A NEW LOOK CCSL COULD RESEMBLE THIS AS EARLY AS 1994

Sydney Metropolitan Clubs
Marconi Fairfield
Sydney United/Sydney Olympic

Melbourne Metropolitan Clubs
South Melbourne
Melbourne Knights/Heidelberg

Victorian Regional Clubs
Morwell Falcons

NSW Regional Clubs
Newcastle BHP Breakers

Queensland Clubs
Brisbane Strikers

South Australian Clubs
West Adelaide
Adelaide City

West Australian Clubs
Perth

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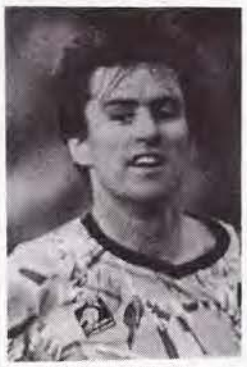


Slipper Wade

'Slipper Wade' had a bad fall in the showers at Marconi which gave the players a bit of a laugh but could have had much more serious consequences. After the goal-less draw with last year's champions the team left the field at 9.20 pm to hurry back to Sydney Airport for a 10.20 flight back home. Wadey put his slippers on to grab a quick shower – but slipped over, hence the new nickname!
Luckily for Paul his injury wasn't serious – although painful.
But on a serious note the ASF has to examine the playing times of these interstate games. Even bringing the kick off forward by thirty minutes would make a huge difference.
A great result against Marconi at their Bossley Park home and we didn't even have time to grab a quick beer .....

The re-birth of Brian Garvey's 'Baby Blues' might well become a reality in the not too distant future judging by the amount of really talented players in the ranks of the youth team. One name for future – and remember who told you first – is BILL DAMIANOS.
Bill is a former Sunshine George Cross Under 16 and has masses of potential. He has impressed the club's coaching staff also and once he builds up more physical strength he is expected to play a part in the first team squad.

Morwell Falcons coach Bobby McLachlan was an interested spectator at the midweek game with Brunswick. While he was impressed with the way we played Bobby has also let the cat out of the bag about the extra games – at least from a player's point of view.
Bobby told me that when he was a player he would rather play a midweek game than train. It seems that times haven't changed as that is the attitude shared by most of the club's squad as well. Although the extra games have caused off-the park problems and have undoubtedly lost us revenue through the gate from a player's point of view they have only served to keep us together more often. That might well prove to be the telling factor on the long push towards the championship.

The interest in soccer just now is incredible. Paul Wade tells me that in his role as a VSF Development Officer he is being inundated with requests from schools to run clinics and coaching days. According to Paul it is more normal for schools to be concentrating on cricket and tennis at this time of the year, but with the huge amount of publicity gained by the Socceroos and their World Cup success the interest in soccer is snowballing.

'The Dressing Room Spy'

Know the players: GARY HASLER

NEXT ISSUE: Kevin Muscat

Gary Hasler is just one of those players who seems to have been around forever. It's surprising to note then that he is still only 23.

In his short yet action filled soccer career Hasler has played for Victorian at youth level, played for Australia at Under 23 level, represented his country at the Olympic Games (where Australia reached the semi-final stage), advanced to be part of the current World Cup campaign as well as finding time to cram in a six week trial with English club, Leeds United.

Most players would see that as the achievements of an entire career yet Hasler still thirsts for more.

"Gary is one of those players that his mates just love to have in the team," said a team-mate.

"You know that he will never give up and that he is prepared to run all day.

"If anything his own game suffers because of his versatility.

"Because of his adaptability he can play anywhere on the field – except goals, but I am sure that he is looking for a chance there too."

At Sunshine Hasler became known as a striker cum midfielder but this season at Middle Park he has played in defence.

That versatility has maybe restricted his international chances also but national coach Eddie Thomson clearly views the rugged Hasler as a part of his future World Cup campaign.

Before joining South Melbourne Hasler trialled at the Elland Road home of Leeds United for six weeks.

His 'partner in crime' at the time was Ned Zelic who has since gone on to stamp his name as a genuine superstar.

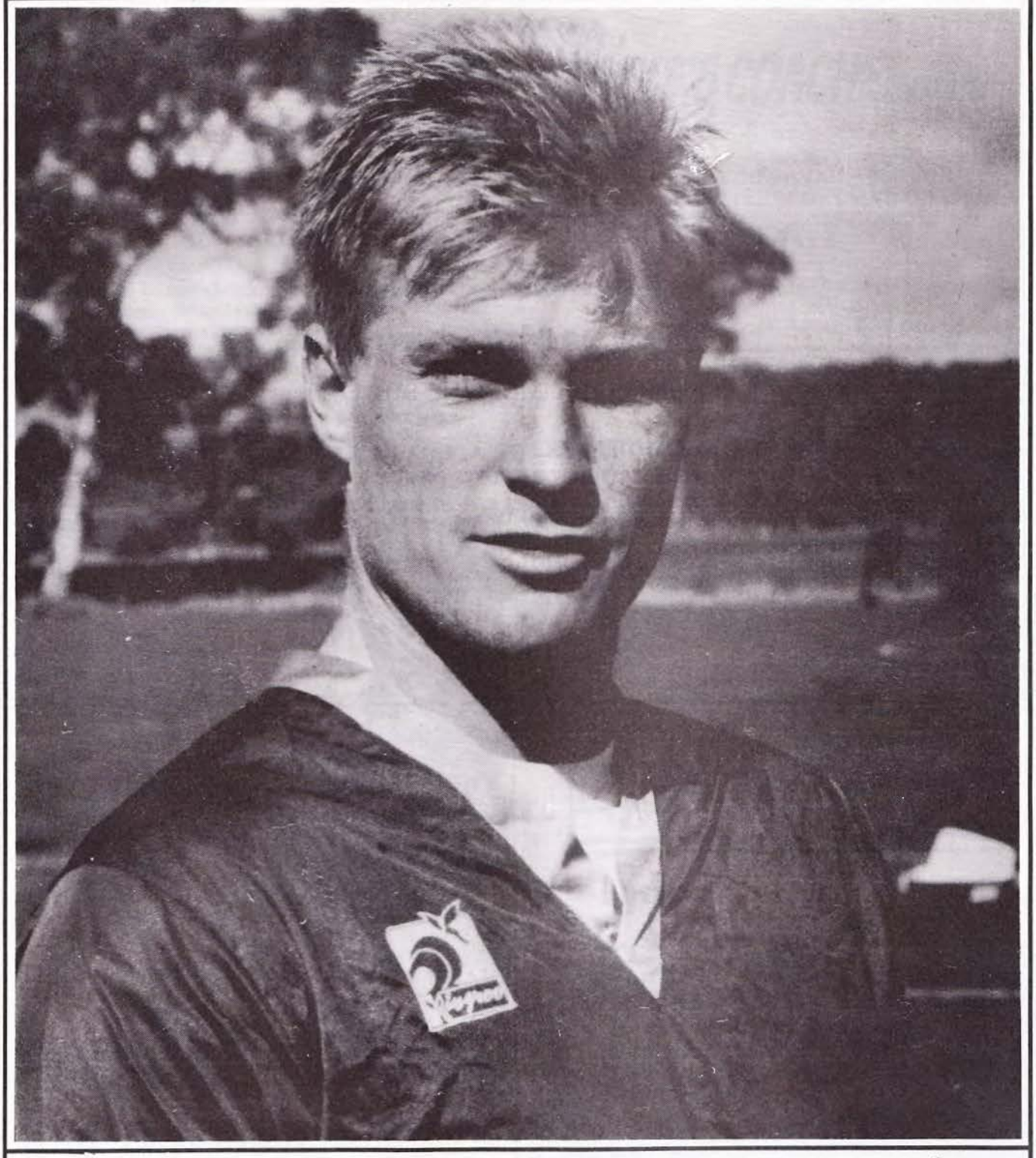
Both players made appearances in the Leeds reserve side and both were considered to be good prospects for the English club.

But Zelic was intent on choosing a career on the European continent where he is now a star in the Borussia Dortmund team while Hasler chose to come back to Australia and sign on for South Melbourne.

As Australian soccer continues its spectacular growth period on the international front the tough guy player ("being tackled by Gary Hasler is like having a toilet wall fall down on you") may yet have made the right decision to stay at home – with his name a fixture in both the blue of South Melbourne and the Green and Gold of Australia for a long time to come.

PRO-FILE

Born: 5.7.70
Position: Utility
Previous Club/s: Sunshine George Cross
CCSL games: 115
CCSL Goals: 9
International Caps:
International Goals:



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Former Blues for Springvale?

Victorian State League club Springvale City has approached two former Blues – Bruce MacLaren and David Healy.

The two players have clocked up nearly 300 CCSL games between them and would be a valuable acquisition for the Noble Park outfit, coached by Gus MacLeod.

Last season Healy was almost an ever present for the club although his position has been more than filled by Kevin Muscat. MacLaren (pictured below) also started the season off as a regular but lost his goalkeeper's jersey to another youngster, Dean Anastasiadis.

And That Goal.....

A lot of doubt centred around the Trimboli/Boutsianis goal against Adelaide City. Did Trimboli tap it over the line, was it one of a Boutsianis hat-trick?

SBS seemed quite convinced that Paul had scored – but the players themselves agreed with the official ASF version which has listed Con as the scorer.

"No Trimmers hasn't done a Craig Johnstone," said skipper Paul Wade referring to the other famous Aussies FA Cup Final tap over. "But he doesn't score many, maybe he could have done with it!"

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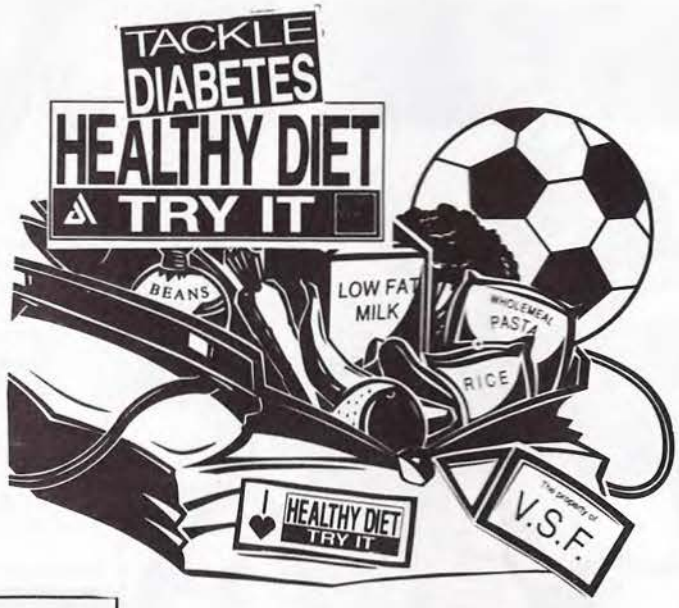
Oct 3	H	Melbourne BU (LC)	W	5–2	Awaritefe (2), Tasios, Trimboli, McGeachey (og)	4,000
Oct 6	A	Melbourne BU (LC)	W	5–2	Boutsianis (3), Trimboli, Awaritefe	4.250
Oct 10	H	Morwell F'cons (LC)	W	4–0	Trimboli (2), Awaritefe, Canosa (og)	4,000
Oct 13	H	Sydney United (LC)	L	1–1	Goutzioulis. * Lost on a penalty shoot out	
Oct 24	A	Sydney United	L	0–1		2,552
Nov 24	H	West Adelaide	W	2–0	Boutsianis, Tasios	4,579
Nov 28	H	Adelaide City	W	3–0	Boutsianis (3)	3,459
Dec 2	H	Melbourne BUSC	W	4–1	Tasios (2), Tsolakis, Awaritefe	4,000
Dec 5	A	Marconi–Fairfield	D	0–0		3,825
Dec 12	H	Heidelberg United				
Dec 15	A	Newcastle Breakers				
Dec 19	A	Melbourne Knights				
Dec 26	H	Brisbane Strikers				
Dec 29	A	Sydney Olympic				
Jan 3	H	Wollongong City				
Jan 5	H	Morwell Falcons				
Jan 9	A	West Adelaide				
Jan 12	H	Sydney United				
Jan 16	H	Parramatta Eagles				
Jan 23	A	Melbourne BUSC				
Jan 26	H	Newcastle BHP				
Jan 30	A	Morwell Falcons				
Feb 5	H	Parramatta Eagles				
Feb 13	A	Adelaide City				
Feb 20	H	Marconi–Fairfield				
Feb 27	A	Heidelberg United				
Mar 6	H	Melbourne Knights				
Mar 12	A	Brisbane Strikers				
Mar 20	H	Sydney Olympic				
Mar 27	A	Wollongong City				



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X	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
X	-	X	X	X	X	Zx	-	Xs	X	Xz	X	X	X	Sx	-
X	X	X	Sx	X	X	X	-	-	X	Xz	X	Xs	-	Zx	-
X	X	X	X	X	X	Xs	Sx	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-
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X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	-

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7 Boutsianis (3 Cup)
5 Awaritefe (4 Cup)
4 Trimboli (4 Cup)
4 Tasios (1 Cup)
1 Tsolakis
1 Trimboli
1 Goutzioulis (1 Cup)

2 own goals (2 Cup)
total goals scored 25 (15 Cup)

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We Are The Blues

Meet the players who carry the hopes of South Melbourne in the 1993/94 CCSL campaign

WADE: 'Captain Socceroo'

TRIMBOLI: public choice

GOALGRABBER: Awaritefe

MEHMET DURAKOVIC

ALAGIOZIDIS, Ike
Born 2.2.68
Previous Club: Panseraikos (Greece) – previously played in Australia with Heidelberg United.
Position: Midfield
CCSL Appearances: 20
CCSL Goals: 0
Played four seasons with Panseraikos before returning to Melbourne after they were relegated to the Greek Second Division. Still waiting to grab his first team chance but a player with loads of potential.

ANASTASIADIS, Dean
Born 6.6.70
Previous Club: Fawkner (played State League)
Position: Goalkeeper
CCSL Appearances: 24
CCSL Goals: 0
Signed at the beginning of last season and got his first team break against Adelaide City after regular custodian Bruce MacLaren was dropped. Kept his place as the club went on a run of 13 games without defeat.

ANTHOPOULOS, Con
Born 20.5.76
Previous Club: juniors
Position: Utility
CCSL Appearances: 0
CCSL Goals: 0
Got his big break in the pre-season Dockerty Cup. Still only 17 he has a big future predicted at Middle Park. Should make his mark in the first team by the end of the season and is already been touted as a possible in the next Olyroo side.

AWARITEFE, Francis
Born 18.4.64
Previous Club: Melbourne Knights
Position: Striker
CCSL Appearances: 125
CCSL Goals: 60
Awaritefe is one of the most exciting players in the CCSL. Last season he was an ever-present in the side and claimed the League's top goalscorer spot with 17 goals. Has broke into the Socceroo side this year and already is showing outstanding League form.

BOUTSIANIS, Con
Born 27.12.71
Previous Club: junior
Position: Striker
CCSL Appearances: 75
CCSL Goals: 24
Now in his sixth season with the Blues he is an established first team choice. Partner in crime up front with Awaritefe, the duo form the most deadly strike force in Australia. A Socceroo call-up is long overdue and he could well figure in the next World Cup campaign.

DURAKOVIC, Mehmet
Born 27.12.71
Previous Club: Melbourne Brunswick
Position: Central Defence
CCSL Appearances: 191
CCSL Goals: 5
The best defender in Australia and a stand-out star of this year's Socceroo campaign. Widely rumoured to be the subject of a bid from Japan. Solid and gutsy defender who rarely plays a bad ball.

GOUTZIOULIS, Angie
Born 15.4.70
Previous Club: Heidelberg United
Position: Midfield
CCSL Appearances: 101
CCSL Goals: 13
A pre-season buy from neighbours Heidelberg in a swap plus cash deal reported to value his signature at $30,000. A no-nonsense type of player, yet to establish himself at Middle Park.

HASLER, Gary
Born 5.7.70
Previous Club: Sunshine George Cross
Position: Utility
CCSL Appearances: 112
CCSL Goals: 9
Now in his third season at Middle Park where he is proving his worth as a play-anywhere footballer. Part of the Barcelona Olympics team and last year made his full international debut as a substitute against Tahiti in the World Cup. Currently holding down one of the full

back positions.

KIRATZOGLOU, Alex
Born 27.8.74
Previous Club: Club Brugge
Position: Striker
CCSL Appearances: 3
CCSL Goals: 0
Made three appearances for the club last season after returning from Belgium. Was also a member of the Young Socceroos squad. Highly rated young player who has stiff opposition to claim a regular first team place.

LENETIS, George
Born 17.7.75
Previous Club: Clifton Hill
Position: Midfield
CCSL Appearances: 0
CCSL Goals: 0
One of the young guns at the club. yet to break into the regular first team set-up and might have to wait a bit because of the surfeit of class midfielders at Middle Park.

MUSCAT, Kevin
Born 7.8.73
Previous Club: Heidelberg United
Position: Defender
CCSL Appearances: 62
CCSL Goals: 0
Played at Portugal '91 and was captain of the Young Socceroos in the last World Youth Cup. Widely tipped to be named as captain of the next Olyroos. Trialled in England in the off-season. Would be a huge loss to the club if he pursued an overseas career but regarded by most pressmen as a fullback in the true English style. Made 18 first team appearances last season.

PANOPOULOS, Steve
Born 23.6.75
Previous Club: AIS from Oakleigh
CCSL Appearances: 1
CCSL Goals: 0
Another of the outstanding young talents at the club. Made his mark in pre-season games and looks assured of a big future with the Blues.

POLAK, Jason

Born 9.1.68
Previous Club: Newcastle Breakers
Position: Midfield
CCSL Appearances:
CCSL Goals:
Seems to have been around for ever and has crammed a stack of experience into his career since he made his CCSL debut with Sydney Olympic. Also had spells overseas with Panathinaikos, Kortrijk and de Graafschap. Member of the World Cup squad.

TASIOS, Steve
Born 31.7.67
Previous Club: Heidelberg United
Position: Midfield
CCSL Appearances: 128
CCSL Goals: 23
Now in his ninth season at Middle Park. Reliable club servant who made 25 first team appearances last season - scoring two goals.

TRIMBOLI, Paul
Born 25.2.69
Previous Club: Sunshine George Cross
Position: Midfield/Striker
CCSL Appearances: 184
CCSL Goals: 59
Joined the club in 1988 and has won just about every honour in the game including Young Player of the Year, Player of the Year as well as appearing for Australia at different levels as well as full international. The 'public's choice' as the player who-should-have-been in the World Cup team.

TSOLAKIS, Peter
Born 10.12.65
Previous Club: Heidelberg United
Position: Striker/Midfield
CCSL Appearances: 198
CCSL Goals: 42
Brilliant striker of a dead ball and second to Wade in the number of all time CCSL appearances amongst current squad. Is also second on the goal-scoring charts. Regular member of the first team since he made his club debut in 1988.

VALKANIS, Mike
Born
Previous Club: juniors
Position: Defence
CCSL Appearances: 4
CCSL Goals: 0
Made first team debut last season against Preston - yet to play in a losing CCSL game! Seen as a player of the future who will be again blooded in this season's campaign

VERIKAKIS, John
Born 3.7.75
Previous Club: juniors
Position: Striker
CCSL Appearances: 4
CCSL Goals: 0
One of the promising former club juniors in the squad who is being groomed for the future. Made his first team debut last season in the 1-1 draw at home to Preston and also played in the play-offs against Marconi.

WADE, Paul
Born 20.3.62
Previous Club: Melbourne Brunswick
Position: Midfield/Central Defence
CCSL Appearances: 235
CCSL Goals: 41
Recently converted to stopper to replace the now-retired Steve Blair. 'Captain Socceroo' with a record 65 full international caps for Australia. Most respected player in Australian soccer and a great servant for the club since his transfer in 1987.

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Club & Player Statistics

Last Season's Player Statistics

Player	CCSLGames	CCSL Goals
Dean Anastasiadis	22	0
Francis Awaritefe	29	17
Steve Blair	15	0
Con Boutsianis	29	10
Mehmet Durakovic	26	0
Gary Hasler	25	1
David Healy	23	0
Alex Kiratzoglou	3	0
Bruce McLaren	7	0
Haris Micheil	11	0
Kevin Muscat	18	0
Micky Petersen	15	1
Angie Postecoglou	1	0
Steve Tasios	25	2
Paul Trimboli	29	8
Peter Tsolakis	24	6
Mike Valkanis	3	0
John Verikakis	4	0
Paul Wade	26	1
Danny Wright	24	0

Player Records

Most CCSL Games (for South Melbourne)
336 Steve Blair (1980–1993)

Club Goal Scoring Records;
Fastest Ever
17 secs Francis Awaritefe, 1993

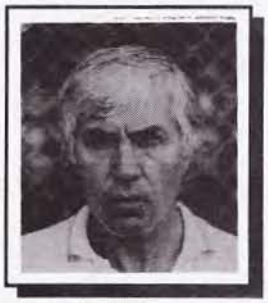
Steve Blair: club record

Most Goals In One Season (CCSL)
22 Doug Brown (1984)

Record Transfer Fee;
Paid by South Melbourne
$35,000 Jason Polak, Nov 1993 (Newcastle BHP Breakers)

Paid to South Melbourne
$150,000 George Christopoulos, July 1981 (PAOK Salonika)

The Man At The Helm
JIM PYRGOLIOS



Born: 27.12.39 (Greece)
Arrived in Australia: 1963

Playing Career
Position: Winger
Clubs:
Panathinaikos (6 years)
Atromitos
South Melbourne

Coaching Career
Assistant Coach, South Melbourne 1989–1992
Senior Coach*, South Melbourne 1992–
Won CCSL Coach of the Year award 1993
* succeeded Ferenc Puskas whom he assisted as assistant coach.

The Coaches (number of games in parenthesis after name, followed by League position)

1977	John Margaritis (17)
	Dave MacLaren (9) – 11th
1978	Dave MacLaren (26) –3rd
1979	Dave MacLaren (7)
	Duncan MacKay (9)
	John Margaritis (10) – 14th*
1980	John Margaritis (26) – 3rd
1981	John Margaritis (30) –2nd
1982	John Margaritis (13)
	Tommy Docherty (13)
	Mick Watson (4) – 6th
1983	Rale Rasic (13)
	Len McKendry (17) – 4th
1984	Len McKendry (32) – 1st
1985	Len McKendry (24) – 1st
1986	John Margaritis (22) – 7th
1987	Brian Garvey (24) – 6th
1988	Brian Garvey (28) – 3rd
1989	Brian Garvey (26) – 8th
89/90	Ferenc Puskas (29) – 2nd
90/91	Ferenc Puskas (29) – 2nd
91/92	Ferenc Puskas (28) – 2nd
92/93	Jim Pyrgolios (29) – 1st
93/94	Jim Pyrgolios

* Deducted three points for playing an ineligible player.

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FORMED: 1959

CLUB HONOURS:
Australian National Champions 1984, 91
CCSL Premiers 1993
National League Cup Winners 1990
Dockerty Cup Winners 1974, 75, 89, 91, 93
Vic Health Gold Cup Winners
1984, 88, 89, 90
Victorian Ampol Cup Winners
1969, 70, 76, 82
State League Champions 1962, 64, 65, 66,
72, 74, 76
First Division North Champions 1960

CLUB COLOURS;
Blue Shirts with white trim
Blue Shorts with white side
Blue Socks

COACH;
Jim Pyrgolios

SCORERS, SUBSTITUTIONS, CAUTIONS, NOTES

Middle Park, Melbourne

Dean Anastasiadis – 1
Kevin Muscat – 2
Gary Hasler – 3
Mehmet Durakovic – 4
Jason Polak – 5
Paul Wade – 6
Peter Tsolakis – 7
Steve Tasios – 8
Paul Trimboli – 9
Con Boutsianis – 10
Francis Awaritefe – 11
Mike Valkanis – 12
Steve Panopoulos – 13
Angie Goutzioulis – 14
Alex Kiratzoglou – 15
John Verikakis – 16
– 17
– 18
– 19
– 20

MARATHON foods

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Sunday,
12th December 1993.

FORMED: 1957

CLUB HONOURS:
National League Cup
Winners 1993
Runners-Up: 1980, 82, 83
Dockerty Cup Runners Up 1973, 87
State League Champions 1975, 88, 90
Vic Health Gold Cup
Winners: 1985
Runners Up: 1986
Harry Armstrong Cup
Winners: 1981

1 – Michael Chatzitrifonos
2 – Gary Bratten
3 – Alan Scott
4 – Doug Hodgson
5 – Joe Palatsides
6 – Goran Negic
7 – Brian MacNicol
8 – Phil Stubbins
9 – Danny Gnjidic
10 – Michael Michalakopoulos
11 – Nemanja Obradovic
12 – Roman Nikolic
13 – Peter Tiktitakis
14 – George Georgiadis
15 – Andrew Vlahos
16 – Mike Panopoulos
17 – Tom Karapatsos
18 –
19 –
20 – Con Karanikolos

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Black Shorts
Gold Socks with black hoops

SCORERS, SUBSTITUTIONS, CAUTIONS, NOTES

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Form is no guide in the big Melbourne derby

by
Alan Gordon

Meetings between South Melbourne and Heidelberg are generally special occasions on the football calendar, often drawing the top crowd of the season.

Last season was no exception when 13,763 fans attended the corresponding fixture. The away game attracted only a slightly smaller figure – 12,243 which was the league's second highest crowd for the season.

Since Heidelberg were re-admitted to the CCSL in season 1990/91 honours haven't always gone the way of the Blues.

Generally the games have been fairly even although South Melbourne lead by four games to one with the other two drawn. The home game results were 2-1, 5-0, and 1-2, while the away tie has seen 2-2, 3-1 and 2-0 (South Melbourne score first).

The 'family' nature of this all-Greek Melbourne derby is heightened by the fact that four of today's Bergers (Michalakopoulos, Tiktikakis and Palatsides are former Blues) while Goutzioulis, Muscat, Tasios and Tsolakis are all former Heidelberg players.

FORMER BLUE: Mike Michalakopoulos

Today's game should be no departure from that norm and a packed crowd is again expected at Middle Park.

But while South Melbourne has hit a purple patch, things aren't going quite so well for our neighbours and rivals.

Problems with his visa saw the enforced and sad departure of Derek Hunter back to Scotland while another contract problem has seen the exodus of David Clarkson to Hong Kong.

Ally Dick, a player who promised so much but delivered so little, has gone off to South Africa to find his game while another player of immense talent, George Slifkas, has been transferred to West Adelaide.

Those losses have been partially offset by the signings of Goran Negic (Red Star), Roman Nikolic (Dynamo Dresden) and Nemanja Obradovic (Adelaide City).

But the biggest loss has unquestionably been that of Angie Goutzioulis who is now happily settled at Middle Park.

Angie came across the city in a swap deal with Haris Micheil and Mike Michalakopoulos which has been estimated in the press as a $35,000 transfer.

In goals, Mike Chatzitrifonos has settled in well in place of Jeff Olver, sacked mid-way through last season in a move which was highly reported in the press at the time.

And while the defence, superbly marshalled by Doug Hodgson, looks to be fairly sound it is in midfield that the Bergers often seem to lose their way.

Up front they have also failed to set the world on fire and coach Drago Sekularac goes into this match badly needing his players to answer some serious questions.

Both sides need the three points from this game – for different reasons.

Heidelberg desperately need the win to give themselves distance from Melbourne's cellar-dweller, Brunswick United, while the Blues need to consolidate that excellent re-start to the season.

For us it is a case of points for a play-off place (it's too early to start talk of Premierships) while the Bergers are looking at their very survival as a credible force.

That makes the game a difficult proposition to predict. That plus all the traditional rivalries of these games over the last thirty years.

For the Bergers much of their game plan will stem from the midfield pairing of Obradovic and Stubbins.

Obradovic has precocious talents which make him a potential match winner at any time, but all too often those talents suffer from lack of service, while in Stubbins they have one of the most underestimated players in the league.

All up, it looks like a very interesting afternoon – and forget about the form book!

BRATTEN, Gary
Born: 1.1.60
Position: Midfield
Previous Club: Caulfield
CCSL Games: 87
CCSL Goals: 5
Experienced player who can fill either back line or midfield positions.

CHATZITRIFONOS, Michael
Born: 8.5.69
Position: Goalkeeper
Previous Club: juniors
CCSL Games: 25
CCSL Goals: 0
Took over from the sacked Jeff Olver part way through last season and has maintained position since.

CURCIJA, Michael
Born: 27.6.77
Position: Midfield
Previous Club: Bulleen
CCSL Games: 0
CCSL Goals:0
First season youngster at Heidelberg, making big jump from State League football. Likely to remain in youth team for this season.

GEORGIADIS, George
Born: 29.10.74
Position: Utility
Previous Club: juniors
CCSL Games: 15
CCSL Goals: 0
Broke through from the youth team last season and another product of the club's youth development scheme. Likely to get regular spot if Palatsides goes overseas.

GNJIDIC, Danny
Born: 7.3.73
Position: Striker
Previous Club: Fawkner
CCSL Games: 14
CCSL Goals: 5
Scored some valuable goals last season in limited first team opportunities. Big tip for the top and a likely call-up into the next Olyroos squad.

HODGSON, Doug
Born: 27.8.69
Position: Defence
Previous Club: Hull City (England)
CCSL Games: 59
CCSL Goals: 0
Brings valuable English league experience to a team which is often cruelly exposed through a lack of just that. Good, solid player.

MacNICOL, Brian
Born: 31.7.68
Position: Midfield
Previous Club: Rochedale
CCSL Games: 64
CCSL Goals: 2
Another player with overseas experience – in Scotland with Premier Division St Mirren. Subject of a transfer bid from Queensland earlier before Bleiberg was sacked.

MICHALAKOPOULOS, Mike
Born: 7.1.2.69
Position: Striker
Previous Club: South Melbourne
CCSL Games: 50
CCSL Goals: 13
Was on loan last season and then at the beginning of the current season transferred along with Haris Micheil in a swap deal involving Angie Goutzioulis. Talented striker who now has the opportunity of a regular first team berth.

MICHEIL, Haris
Born:
Position:
Previous Club: South Melbourne
CCSL Games: 56
CCSL Goals: 2
Spent six seasons at Middle Park before crossing over to the Bergers at the beginning of the season.

NIKOLIC, Roman
Born: 7.7.73
Position: Midfield
Previous Club: Bonnyrigg
CCSL Games: 0
CCSL Goals: 0
Former Red Star Belgrade youth team captain who also spent some time in Germany with Dynamo Dresden before playing in the winter with NSW club, Bonnyrigg.

OBRADOVIC, Nemanja
Born: 14.4.70
Position: Midfield

South Melbourne Hellas Soccer Club Ltd.

would like to wish its players, staff, supporters and followers of Australian soccer the very best compliments of the festive season.

Merry Christmas

Previous Club: Adelaide City
CCSL Games: 12
CCSL Goals: 0
Attacking midfielder with excellent shot. Failed to get a regular first team run at Adelaide last season. Shone in early season games although his form has shaded off a bit recently.

PALATSIDES, Joe
Born: 2.7.65
Position: Striker
Previous Club: South Melbourne
CCSL Games: 176
CCSL Goals: 32
Trialled in Greece during the off-season and is the subject of a last minute transfer bid by Greek first division side, Kalamaria. Probably the most valuable player at Olympic Village.

SCOTT, Alan
Born: 20.9.63
Position: Defender
Previous Club: Melbourne Knights
CCSL Games: 171
CCSL Goals: 7
Also played CCSL with West Adelaide and adds a touch of experience to the back line. Solid, dependable if un-flashy player.

STUBBINS, Philip
Born: 18.10.62
Position: Midfield
Previous Club: Bridlington Town (England)
CCSL Games: 112
CCSL Goals: 23
Probably the most underestimated midfielder in the league. Has made the huge jump up in standard from the obscurity of non-league football in northern England. The engine room at Heidelberg.

TIKTIKAKIS, Peter
Born: 4.1.73
Position: Midfield
Previous Club: South Melbourne
CCSL Games: 4
CCSL Goals: 0
Another of the former Blues at Olympic Village. Used only as a sub last season and has still failed to break into the regular first team line up.

VLAHOS, Andrew
Born: 21.4.76
Position:Striker
Former Club: juniors
CCSL Games: 0
CCSL Goals: 0
One of the club's juniors being given chance of first team football this season.

CCSL Games & Goals are those as of the last game of season 1992/93

From the Press Box

Sydney United 1 South Melbourne 0

This was one of those games – lots of possession and nothing to show from it. In the first thirty minutes the Blues did enough to be in front. Paul Wade, in his last game before going into camp with the Socceroos, did everything that could be asked for in midfield where he was partnered by Jason Polak – making his CCSL club debut.
Even early into the second half South Melbourne had control – until United brought on Ante Milicic who single handedly turned this game around. In the end the Blues were lucky to escape with a 1–0 loss and could have had really suffered if the referee had awarded the penalty claimed by United when Anastasiadis upended Milicic in the box.

BEST BLUE; Paul Wade

South Melbourne 2 West Adelaide 0

The first game after a five week break because of the Socceroo games this was expected to be hard going. In the end it proved anything but as a surprisingly poor West Adelaide surrendered to two goals from the Blues. At the end of the ninety minutes it could have been more, but it was good to get going again with a win.

BEST BLUE; Con Boutsianis

South Melbourne 3 Adelaide City 0

Everyone predicted a tough game – and again everyone was wrong. Despite a well contested opening 15 minutes the rest of the game turned into a show of attacking brilliance from the well–oiled South Melbourne machine. Maybe the best goal was the Boutsianis' strike set up from a cheeky Awaritefe back heel. Up front Boutsianis ran absolute riot to cap off a personal best game of the season.

BEST BLUE; Con Boutsianis

South Melbourne 4 Melbourne BUSC 1

Brunswick have fast become the league's easy–beats and against an in–form South Melbourne they stood no chance. Perhaps they would have fared better if they hadn't stole into an early lead, but that goal seemed to spur the Blues from their lethargy and they then proceeded to rip the Zebras apart. As one rival coach put it after the game, "four – it could have been forty–four!"

BEST BLUE; Steve Tasios

Marconi 0 South Melbourne 0

A game of missed opportunities for both sides. Chief culprit for the Fairfielders was former Blue, Kimon Taliadoros. In this game Kimon failed to show even a glimpse of the form which made him a Middle Park favourite and earned him a Socceroo place. On the other hand Angie Goutzioulis had a brilliant game as a stand–in for the suspended Awaritefe and came close with two brilliant efforts, the best of which was a snap shot low volley which had goal written all over it. Jason Polak was also unlucky not to be on the scoresheet.

BEST BLUE; Angie Goutzioulis

Back Chat .....

(reported snippets from the press – and where the Blues occasionally bite back!)

"They might have shuffled a few deck chairs on the good ship SS Melbourne Brunswick but it still didn't stop the seemingly ill–fated vessel from sinking without a trace against the tidal wave known as South Melbourne ....." (Greg Blake)

"South had 16 attempts on goal in the second half while Brunswick's only response was a goal by substitute Anthony Budini which was disallowed for offside." (Peter Desira)

"Souths looked far more organised and balanced, especially in the midfield where Peter Tsolakis, Paul Trimboli, Steve Tasios and Jason Polak far outclassed the home side in tenacity and creativity." (John Economos after the game with Marconi).

Australian Soccer Weekly player points;
3 Wade 2 Durakovic 1 Taliadoros – Taliadoros! (the same John Economos).

"Club programme has potential, but suffers from the usual intrinsic cliches ....." (Con Stavros giving his valuable insight into South Melbourne's marketing faults) – which other club in the country produces a 32 page magazine covering the whole of the CCSL, results, profiles, the works?

"Steve Tasios is one of the game's genuine heroes." (Greg Blake)

and finishing on a lighter note .....
"Are you sitting on Eddie's knee?" (Tommy Anderson to Kyle Patterson with his usual shrewd questioning technique on SBS's *On The Ball*).

"Why don't you shut up Tommy?" (Eddie Thomson who had obviously had enough of Anderson, the Ricky Fulton of Australian soccer journalism).

CCSL NEWS .... CCSL NEWS .... CCSL NE

ROUND 7

Newcastle United 0
Morwell Falcons 0

Wollongong Wolves 3 (McFadden, Lloyd – 2)
Heidelberg United 1 (Michalakopoulos)

South Melbourne 3 (Boutsianis – 3)
Adelaide City 0

Brisbane Strikers 0
Sydney United 1

Melbourne BUSC 0
Parramatta Eagles 1

Sydney Olympic 2
Melbourne Knights 3

West Adelaide 0
Marconi–Fairfield 2

MIDWEEK CATCH–UP GAMES

South Melbourne 4 (Tsolakis, Tasios – 2, Awaritefe)
Melbourne BUSC 1 (Becvinovski)

Adelaide City 0
Heidelberg United 0

ROUND 8

Marconi–Fairfield 0
South Melbourne 0

Brisbane Strikers 2 (Meacock – 2)
Sydney Olympic 3 (Caleta, Cardozo, Tsekenis)

Morwell Falcons 1 (Cassar)
Sydney United 1 (Krslovic)

Adelaide City 6 (Tobin, Mullen, Mori, Hassell, Maxwell, Talladira)
Melbourne BUSC 0

Parramatta Eagles 4 (Spiteri, Soper – 3)
Newcastle Breakers 0

West Adelaide 3 (Blair, Mills, Brazzale)
Heidelberg United 0

Melbourne Knights 2 (Silic, Viduka)
Wollongong Wolves 0

Coca-Cola Soccer League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Melbourne Knights	**8**	**5**	**1**	**2**	**17**	**8**	**16**
Sydney Olympic	**8**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**15**	**13**	**14**
Marconi–Fairfield	**8**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**13**	**9**	**14**
Sydney United	**8**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**10**	**10**	**13**
Parramatta Eagles	**7**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**9**	**5**	**12**
Newcastle Breakers	**7**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**10**	**7**	**11**
South Melbourne	5	3	1	1	9	2	10
West Adelaide	7	3	1	3	10	6	10
Morwell Falcons	7	2	3	2	6	4	9
Wollongong Wolves	7	2	2	3	8	10	8
Adelaide City	5	1	2	2	9	8	5
Brisbane Strikers*	**7**	**1**	**2**	**4**	**6**	**8**	**5**
Heidelberg United	8	1	3	4	5	15	5
Melbourne Brunswick	8	0	2	6	3	23	2

* starred club is lowest placed Regional team, which is subject to relegation at the end of the season

THIS WEEK–END'S MATCHES

Friday
Wollongong Wolves v Brisbane Strikers
Newcastle Breakers v Adelaide City
Saturday
Morwell Falcons v Parramatta Eagles
Sunday
Melbourne BUSC v Marconi
West Adelaide v Melbourne Knights
Sydney United v Sydney Olympic
South Melbourne v Heidelberg Utd

The Next Match At Middle Park is

v

Brisbane Strikers

Sunday, December 26, 1993

Come And Celebrate Xmas With The Blues

Arok Keeps Control

Almost without exception the Australian soccer press pre-season predictions had Marconi running away with the 1993/94 CCSL title.

That that isn't happening is a good thing for the local game, although it might not look that way if you support the Bossley Parkers.

Strangely, it took Marconi until Round 3 to even get into the Top Six – and it took an Andrew Stowell own goal to give Marconi the necessary three points against Brisbane which propelled them into the leadership contention.

Marconi coach Frank Arok disagreed that he should be concerned with the lack of form of some of his big name players.

"Concern isn't the correct expression," said Arok.

"I haven't been very happy with our results so far, but we will get better and better.

"We are not hitting our rhythm, we are not playing fluently and at the moment it is even hard to get eleven fit players, even for our training sessions.

"In our first three games we had three different goalkeepers."

Arok was also affected by the loss of Steve Corica and Mark Schwarzer away on national team duties as well as seeing Andy Harper and Ian Gray fighting their way back to fitness after operations.

Other injuries to key players like Glenn Johnston, Mike Smith, Ermanno Pelucchi and Tommy McCulloch have only added to Arok's woes plus the almost ritual slow start of former South Melbourne favourite, Kimon Taliadoros.

Even the signing of Andrea Icardi hasn't helped the Marconi side to settle down.

Arok makes the point that "no-one can help the team if it isn't playing well."

But with imminent return of Corica and Schwarzer, plus the gradual return to fitness of the other Marconi stars, the Bossley Park fans can expect to see some of the flashes of form which stamped the class of the team last season.

Arok reacts strongly to any suggestion that he is putting up a smoke-screen by earlier claims that his side needed seven to eight games to hit its straps.

And the astuteness of the former Socceroo boss is being proven as the champions scrambled for those precious early season points.

But Arok has taken all the varying factors into consideration as he plots out another season in his normal style – a style which sees him in control of his team's destiny.

Knowledge of the effects of injury and the psychology of players have proven an important arrow in the Arok quiver in the past and this season will be no exception.

In the meantime Marconi fans are grateful that their side is staying in touch with the front runners – with a second successive championship title their end of the season target.

Dal-Santo signs for Adelaide

Adelaide City has signed 17-year-old Queensland born keeper Clint Dal-Santo, a player described by one Brisbane soccer pundit as "having more potential than Mark Bosnich."

That is a big statement but one which typifies the confidence that the Northerners have in the tall number one who burst onto the local XXXX State League scene last season with Taringa Rovers.

"Clint was supposed to be going to Brisbane Strikers," explained John Kerr, a Director of the Football Management Group.

"But with all the changes that have happened recently in Brisbane that didn't look like happening."

But even Dal-Santo's biggest fans don't expect him to oust City's regular keeper, Socceroo Robert Zabica – or at least not yet. Zabica missed only his first game in over four seasons two weeks ago in a re-scheduled midweek tie and it is that sort of form and fitness which is likely to keep the highly rated young talent on the learning ropes for a while

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Brisbane Strikers: Can they really shoot for the top?

STRIKERS READY TO TAKE ON AXIS POWERS

Brisbane Strikers are carrying more than just the hopes of a club in the 1993/94 CCSL season – they are carrying the big time soccer dreams of the entire northern state.

The Strikers (playing last season as United) are the third Brisbane club to participate in the CCSL in its eighteen seasons of existence.

Before the Strikers gained promotion in 1991 Queensland had been represented by Brisbane Lions and Brisbane City.

Despite the high hopes of both those clubs, Brisbane has, so far, failed to really take a grip on the national league scene.

The only northern successes have been in the Cup – won by Brisbane City in 1977 and 1978 – but until this season that was a competition which was never really taken totally seriously by any of the big clubs.

The axis of power in the CCSL has stayed firmly between the three main soccer cities – Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

That will no doubt upset a few people in Brisbane but it must remembered that every single championship has been one by one of the 'axis' clubs and the regional centres of Canberra, Newcastle, Wollongong, Morwell and Brisbane just haven't been able to produce the goods – yet.

But there are signs that that is beginning to change.

Brisbane looks to have finally got its act together.

Long time supporter Alf Williams takes up the cudgel.

"I really think that Bruce Stowell has got the makings of a good team," said Williams.

"The re-signing of Troy Cranney was perhaps Stowell's best achievement.

"Troy is so under-rated by most of the Australian soccer media but he really is a top class player.

"Also Stowell has given an opportunity for players like Clint Boulton, Andy Lees and Alun Evans.

"I'm sure that some these, and the other young players at Perry Park, will go on to become names in soccer."

And despite the problems that Brisbane had to face up to off the field during the winter (who could call that glorious Queensland sunshine winter – Ed!) the club pulled in a healthy crowd above last season's average gate for its first home game against Parramatta Eagles.

That was a sign that the public are ready to get behind their team.

"Look out for young Lees," says Williams.

"He is a boy with a great future.

"If he gets a reasonable service then he will do some real damage.

"And Clint Boulton is a young keeper with a big future.

"I'll go so far as to say that Clint can play for Australia one day – and that's a big wrap."

But there is a lot of water to flow under the Brisbane bridge in the meantime, while Bruce Stowell gets on with the day to day job of re-building Brisbane's soccer stocks.

Unhappy Wolf flies back to Ireland

Wollongong City's recent signing, Donal O'Brien, has flown out of Australia after an unhappy stay with the Brandon Park club.

O'Brien, a League of Ireland representative and current Irish Player of the Year, failed to cement a regular place in the Wolves' side.

After being dropped for his club's clash with Morwell Falcons, which the home side lost 2–0, O'Brien decided to head back to Dublin.

Wollongong secured the services of O'Brien, a 6' 2" attacking midfielder, for the season on loan for a fee of $5,000.

"Originally I had intended to play in Europe with Sparta Rotterdam but Derry put a fee of $200,000 on me," said O'Brien.

"That was enough to scare them off so I decided to come to back to Australia where I had played for a couple of seasons with North Perth Croatia."

The Wolves' signing of the big player looked to be one of the best moves of the off–season but things didn't work out that way and the player decided to cut his losses short.

"I'd like to come back to Australia once I sort things out with Derry City," said O'Brien prior to his flight last Friday.

"I've left everything in the hands of my agent and I'll just have to see what happens."

Michalakopoulos – looking to repay Heidelberg's confidence

Michael Michalakopoulos was once one of the bright young players at South Melbourne and although his first team chances were limited it still came as something of a surprise when last season he transferred to near neighbours and rivals, Heidelberg United.

"All players want to play in the first team," said the twenty three year old striker.

"South Melbourne has got a huge squad of 17 or 18 players.

"One season I scored eight goals but that still wasn't enough to force my way into the team. It was very hard – I was up against internationalists like Paul Trimboli and Kimon Taliadoros. When Kimon left (for Marconi) I thought that there was a chance but South Melbourne went and bought Francis Awaritefe.

"I thought that that didn't show much faith in me as a player, so I made a move to Heidelberg."

Last season Michalakopoulos played in 14 first team games for the Bergers – and repaid that confidence with 4 goals. That gave him a total of 54 games for 13 goals at the start of the season – a strike rate of 25%. He will be looking for a bigger haul this season, a term which should see his status confirmed as a first team regular. Partnering the young striker in the forward line is another ex Blue – Joe Palatsides.

Michalakopoulos believes that the training methods and professionalism of Bergers' coach Dragoslav Sekularac will eventually pay off for the Melbourne based club.

"We will be right," says the well spoken young forward, "our chances will come."

Youth transition – it's difficult says Foley

Newcastle Breaker's coach Jim Foley is another one of the growing band in Australian soccer who recognise the need for an intermediary competition between the Youth League and the CCSL.

"It isn't a major problem running a team in the Youth League," says Foley, "and although it is an added expense it represents good value for the club.

"But there is a considerable gap between the two leagues and it isn't an easy transition for the players to make."

Many coaches have expressed an interest in a second division style of competition but at the moment the Australian Soccer Federation has no plans for an extension to its competitions.

"The State Federations can't run their leagues in the summer," said an ASF official, "and just now there is enough expense in running the competitions that we have."

But it would seem that an expansion into some sort of a regionally based second division format is a possibility – even though it would be far off in the future.

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Angie Goutzioulis looks on as David Healy climbs high to head away in last season's big clash with Heidelberg. Now Goutzioulis is turning on the style for the Blues.

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Those were the days ....

Remember when Canberra City were in the CCSL?
South Melbourne had a strange record against the team from the capital – in seven years of home games we could only manage two solitary one goal wins, with four draws and a 2–1 loss.
In all that time we scored only six goals but away from home it was a different story. 16 goals helped us to four wins and two draws.
We remember the teams from Canberra on this two page pictorial – a club which featured some great players in its line–up before sadly bowing out of the top flight.
Players like Frankie Farina, Tony Henderson, Adrian Alston, George Christopoulos, Jimmy Cant and Tony Franken as well as guest players like Ian Callaghan (Liverpool and England) and Peter Marinello (Hibernian, Arsenal and Scotland).

IAN CALLAGHAN: he enjoyed his spell at Canberra so much that he went back to England where he picked up his League careere with Liverpool again

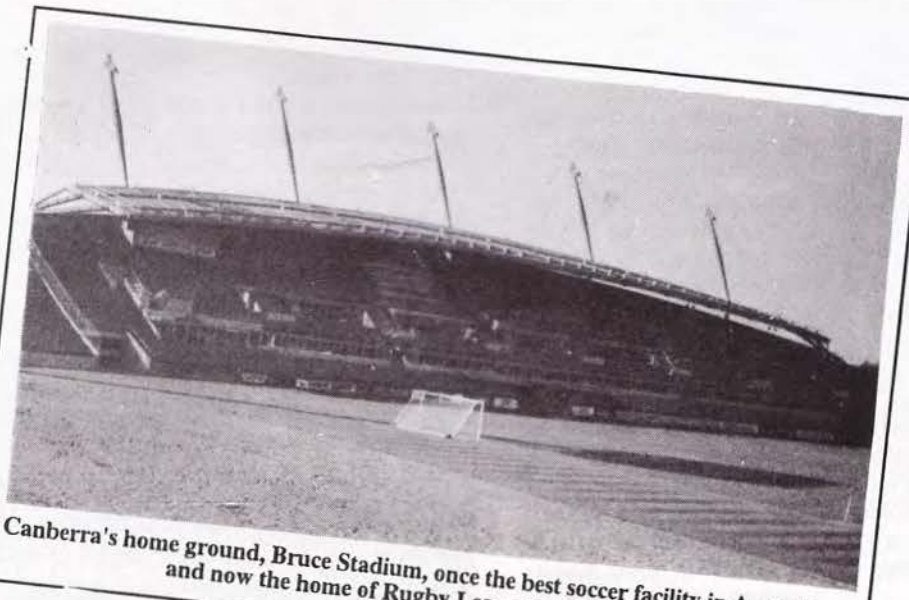
What Are Your Top Stories, Who Are Your Favourite Players?

why not drop the Editor a line there might even be a mystery prize to give away for any printed letters

Arthur Xanthopoulos closes in on Canberra's Walter Valeri – one of the CCSL's best ever strikers. Following behind is another Middle Park favourite, Billy Rogers.

Another all-time Middle Park crowd pleaser, Wee Georgie Campbell, shuts down John Moutsopoulos

Canberra's Tony Brennan slips Socrates Nicolaidis a dummy – watched by Don McLaren



Canberra's home ground, Bruce Stadium, once the best soccer facility in Australia and now the home of Rugby League and baseball

Baby Blues IN FOCUS

a regular look at our Stars of the Future

The future looks bright

Maybe the first team is packed out with big name stars, players like Awaritefe, Durakovic, Polak, Hasler and of course our own Captain Socceroo, Paul Wade, but that doesn't mean that a youth policy isn't alive and doing well at Middle Park.

"No, we have a very sound policy on youth development," says club assistant coach, Socrates Nicolaidis.

"We have a lot of good younger players at the club and their time will come in the first team."

Socrates, formerly colts' coach, youth team coach and now assistant to Jimmy Pyrgolios, is in a good position to judge.

He is a former first team player himself having graduated through the youth ranks also.

"In my day I had to compete for a first team place against the imports but today the boys are up against their own buddies.

"That's a different thing entirely.

"We are looking at producing the next Baby Blues in the future, we don't want our good young players to leave the club."

At the weekends Socrates can be seen running the rule over the youth team, checking up on any future stars, and also looking out for the first team squad players who are having a run.

"Jimmy is very concerned with the attitude of the squad players when they go back to play in the youth team," says the long time club servant.

"It is important that they show enough maturity to handle a difficult situation."

Just now players like Steve Panopoulos, Alex Kiratzoglou, Johnny Verikakis and Mike Valkanis have all had their turn in the first team.

That's a spur on for the other talent in the youth team, a talent that Socrates Nicolaidis is convinced will one day turn it on for the passionate supporters at Middle Park as the next generation Baby Blues.

Apprenticeship Scheme:

It'll Be Well Worth The Wait

Some years ago St George pioneered an apprenticeship scheme which has produced some of the finest young talent in Australia – and overseas, players like Marconi's Matthew Bingley and Sheffield Wednesday's Adem Poric.

Now the management of South Melbourne are turning their attention to the possibility of such a scheme taking off at Middle Park, but in the true tradition of the club progress towards that ultimate goal will be steady rather than flashy and risking failure.

Talks have taken place on the possible apprenticeship scheme for the last year and it seems that we are ready to embark on the first step with the introduction of a winter training programme for elite young players.

It is happening at Marconi (again under the watchful eye of former St George guru, Frank Arok) as well as the various Academies of Sport and VIS. The South Melbourne approach is to institute an elite programme with the next step a full apprenticeship scheme.

But a lot of work has to be undertaken before that will eventuate, and like everything in this day and age marketing comes in as a strong ally to any on-field venture.

But the work is already taking place, and the end result when achieved is sure to be well worth waiting for.

Parlez-Vous PSG

One youth team player who has already sampled international experience that some of the senior players would envy is Evan Carey.

Evan has already lined up in the colours of the famous French club, Paris St Germain.

While on a school exchange programme in France for six months Evan took time out to go along with his boots to PSG.

To say that that the French were impressed with our young starlet is an understatement.

With Robbie Slater and Frankie Farina doing so well in French football the Paris high-flyers were more than willing to have a close look at Evan.

That he did so well in his short stint with PSG is a testament to his own ability – and a sure sign that his a name to look out for in the future.

NEXT ISSUE: our Youth Team in full profile, plus a wrap up of the season so far – and the start of a Baby Blue Profile series

FRANCIS AWARITEFE: the South Melbourne goal grabber has earned a Socceroo cap since his move to Middle Park

Come on you blues ....

SOUTH MELBOURNE SNIPPETS

Special mention must be made of South Melbourne's newest star, **STEVE PANOPOULOS** who made his first team debut against Melbourne Brunswick, Steve looks to be on the threshold of a long career in Australian soccer with the Blues.

ANGIE GOUTZIOULIS **has also joined the club of players who have played 100 games in the CCSL. Well done, Angie – and a belated welcome to the club.**

Next week **BARRY HORSFALL** and **PAUL WADE** make the trek north into the New South Wales town of Griffith where they will be the main guests in a special presentation and coaching clinic. The Riverina town is turning on the style and a reception plus press conference will also be held.

And January sees skipper Paul Wade **heading to Canberra where he will be one of the guests instructors at the ACTSF coaching clinic. Local official Ron Watkins has expressed his delight at the commitment of the Aussie skipper and already the clinic is attracting widespread Canberra media coverage.**

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THE INSIDE SOCCER READERS' LETTERS COLUMN

DON'T MISS IT – *THIS IS HOT*

letters to the Editor are encouraged on any subject relating to soccer

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